



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Stop the Belly-Aching

Rotavirus Vaccination Coverage and Adherence to Age Recommendations — United States, February 2006–May 2007

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Despite taking every possible precaution in the book, parents have been at a loss to keep their children from catching that awful stomach bug known as rotavirus. Nearly every child under the age of five years has encountered the illness, which causes diarrhea, vomiting, and dehydration. If severe enough, it can result in a trip to the hospital. But now, parents have a new weapon in the war against rotavirus with the introduction of RotaTeq,[®] a vaccine designed to prevent this common childhood ailment.

Haley Clayton is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. She's joining us today to discuss the rotavirus vaccine. Welcome to the show, Haley.

[Ms. Clayton] Thanks for having me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Haley, what makes rotavirus infection such a common illness among young children?

[Ms. Clayton] Well, rotavirus is transmitted very easily and it doesn't take much of the virus to cause an infection. And because it occurs mostly among young children who are very good at spreading germs, it's very difficult to prevent the spread of it.

[Dr. Gaynes] What steps can parents take to prevent this ailment in their children?

[Ms. Clayton] Well, previously it was very difficult for parents to prevent their children from getting the virus. However, we now have a vaccine that is available that prevents the virus.

[Dr. Gaynes] How long has the rotavirus vaccine been available and recommended?

[Ms. Clayton] Well, it was licensed and recommended in February of 2006 so it's still a relatively new vaccine.

[Dr. Gaynes] How is the vaccine administered, and how many doses are required?

[Ms. Clayton] Well, the vaccine is administered by mouth and is given in three doses at two, four, and six months of age.

[Dr. Gaynes] Is the vaccine proving to be effective?

[Ms. Clayton] Well, in pre-licensure clinical trials, the vaccine was 74 percent effective against any rotavirus illness, and it was 98 percent effective against severe rotavirus illness. It's still too early for us to tell how effective the vaccine is now that it's out in the market. However, we do have several surveillance systems that are monitoring this very closely.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are there any possible side effects?

[Ms. Clayton] The vaccine is generally very well-tolerated.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about the rotavirus vaccine?

[Ms. Clayton] Listeners can go to CDC's rotavirus website, which is located at www.cdc.gov/rotavirus, and rotavirus is spelled r-o-t-a-v-i-r-u-s.

[Dr. Gaynes] Haley, thanks for sharing this information with our listeners today.

[Ms. Clayton] Thanks very much.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, that's it for this week's show. Be sure and join us again next week. Until then, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.